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## IN MEMORIAM: MYRLE L. JONES

1902-1966

FRED J. PIERCE

WINTHROP, IOWA

As one makes his way through life, he gains certain friends who seem to stand well above all the others. Either through force of character or genial companionship, these persons are in a separate class. Myrle Jones was one of these. I enjoyed his intimate friendship for more than thirty years. I have rich memories of countless field bird trips in his company.



M. L. Jones at Arkansas home, summer of 1965. Photo by Dr. Eunice Christensen

Myrle Lawrence Jones was born on a farm near Keswick, Keokuk County, Iowa, on January 30, 1902. His parents were Ransom and May (Bell) Jones. He attended Keswick school and graduated in 1921, then enrolled at Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls, where he completed a two-year Industrial Arts course. After teaching in North English for two years, he returned to Cedar Falls and received the degree of Bachelor of Science in 1928. On the day of graduation, he was married to Miss Margaret Metcalf, of Wat-



erloo. This was a most fortunate choice, for she joined him wholeheartedly in all his outdoor activities and was always a capable and sympathetic assistant.



M. L. Jones at Waubesa State Park, Oct., 1941. Photo by Fred Pierce.

Later he continued his education with graduate work at Iowa State University, Ames, where he held a teaching fellowship in Botany for one year. He was affiliated with the Christian and Methodist churches.

Myrle's interest in birds was awakened in childhood. The initial spark kindled a fire of enthusiasm for bird study that never diminished. He became one of Iowa's fine field ornithologists. He often spoke of his first bird book — an eastern guide with no pictures, in which the descriptions of the sparrows all began with: "mottled brown, black and flaxen." An asthmatic condition appeared early and troubled him most of his life. When he was about ten years old the doctor prescribed sleeping and living outdoors for his asthma. He spent as much time as possible in the open while his interest in birds and all nature grew apace.

By the time he was in high school he had a sizable collection of birds' eggs. He became an all-around naturalist, with special studies giving him a

substantial knowledge of Botany, Mammalogy, Geology, Herpetology, Archaeology and various other sciences. A field trip with him was always enjoyable, for he would point out and name so many objects along the way.

I recall one trip in southwest Iowa when we were crossing a burned-over cornfield. He picked up a 6-foot bullsnake, twined it around his neck and talked to it for quite a distance as we walked across the field. Myrle collected rocks with considerable zest. Many kinds were brought home from a Geology trip with an Ames class through Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma in 1941. His collection of fossils came from all parts of the United States, while he collected Indian artifacts in New Mexico, South Dakota and Iowa.

Myrle's career as a teacher in Iowa was a long and productive one. He taught two years at North English, two years at the State Juvenile Home at Toledo, one year at Eldora, and ten years at Pomeroy. The Boy Scout program which attracted him in his early years of teaching, gave an added emphasis to his outdoor trips. He was soon doing full-scale scout activities with an enthusiasm that was characteristic of him. At the State Juvenile Home, which is maintained for neglected and dependent children, he did his most intensive scouting. A gratification for his hard work there was seeing at least five boys attain the Eagle rank, while a number of them went on to responsible positions in adult life.

The one hundred or more boy scouts who were associated with Myrle in different places where he taught had a greater heritage than perhaps they realized at the time. He opened their eyes to the wonders of the outdoor world, and their lives were richer through the careful teaching of this dedicated scout leader. Myrle held the title of Honorary Scoutmaster in the Long's Peak Boy Scout Council in Colorado. He was Scoutmaster two years at Toledo, one year at Eldora, and ten years at Pomeroy, Iowa.

When the Iowa State Conservation Commission established a Park Naturalist service, Myrle was an appointee. Here again his skill as a teacher and lecturer proved to be a great asset. He was Park Naturalist at Ledges and Dolliver State Parks 1938 to 1940, and State Naturalist supervising nature education in nine parks April to October, 1941. In October, 1941, he went to Waubonsie State Park, in Fremont County, as a Park Officer. He and his wife established their home in the picturesque park setting of Waubonsie. They were transferred to the Ledges, near Boone, in May, 1942, to Fort Defiance at Estherville in 1952, and to Bellevue State Park in 1962. An ideal couple for park work, they made countless friends among the thousands of visitors to the Iowa state parks in the years 1941 through 1965. Myrle retired in 1965 because of ill health. They purchased an acreage near Dover, Arkansas, and moved there in the summer of 1965.

Myrle became a member of Iowa Ornithologists' Union in 1931. With his wife he attended his first convention in 1934 (Ames). At the Fairfield convention in 1936, he was elected President of the Union. He served two years as President, and as always he gave unsparingly of his time. He and his wife were hosts to the Union for one spring meeting (Estherville, 1957) and three fall meetings (Ledges, 1950; Estherville, 1959; Bellevue, 1964).

He wrote many articles for Iowa Bird Life and appeared on the programs of many of our conventions. A very good speaker, he was witty and entertaining with an easy style that carried a worthwhile message. An avid photographer, he had a collection of more than 2,000 kodachrome slides taken by him and his wife. These were used to illustrate his talks. A demand grew for his services as a lecturer. He found himself talking before many groups of persons—often in places requiring long drives, but always giving freely of his time and leaving his audiences with a better understanding of conservation and the study of wild life.

Bird-banding attracted him in 1933, when he made a modest beginning. With wife Margaret as an invaluable assistant, he banded steadily twelve months of the year for thirty-three years, handling a total of 14,093 birds of 144 species. Very skillful with tools, he devised many of his own traps and lures for birds. For fifteen years he gave talks and banding demonstrations at the Teachers' Conservation Camp, at Springbrook State Park. He was a member of the Inland Bird-Banding and Eastern Bird-Banding Associations; also the Arkansas Audubon Society. His outdoor pursuits included hunting, fishing, skating and many others. He particularly liked to hunt squirrels and pheasants.

My fondest memories of Myrle are perhaps in the Christmas bird counts that we made in the Backbone State Park. He was with me on the Christmas counts each year from 1934 through 1941, then 1944 through 1951, 1956 through 1959, and 1962 and 1963. He often drove long distances to join me on these trips. Sometimes Myrle and I would make the count alone, but often Margaret and my wife as well as various other persons were with us.

During many winters the Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*) hibernated in the cave in the northern part of the park. Each year we would crawl some 300 feet into the cave and count the hibernating bats, sometimes photographing them. In later years they disappeared from the cave. On each trip we ate our noon lunch near the entrance to the cave. On one trip (1951) we forgot the skillet in which we were to cook hamburgers, but Myrle, always resourceful, got a shovel out of the trunk of his car, washed it in the cold waters of the trout stream, and our hamburgers were a special treat. On another occasion I remember Myrle carrying me on his back across the Maquoketa River in the park. He had high boots for wading and I had none.

Myrle's sense of humor was highly developed. In August of 1966, after his first year in Arkansas, he and Margaret visited us in Winthrop. He delayed somewhat as Margaret came into our house, then appeared in hillbilly attire for our benefit. He was barefooted, shirtless, and was dressed only in overalls and a battered straw hat.

He liked to write to his friends and he did so frequently and at length. His letters sparkled with good humor and witticisms. His last letter to me, written from his hospital bed in late October, was typical. Here is a short excerpt:

"Well, I went squirrel hunting, shot myself in the hip, and now here I am in the hospital. It's a little like Bruce Stiles' favorite story of the mule — a matter of getting your attention. The above facts are all as stated but grossly misleading. I did get a squirrel—finally in my own front yard, but the shot in the hip was an asthma shot with a needle . . . I've had a low grade fever for several weeks now, and if I can't have a high grade fever, I don't want any." (My last letter to him arrived two hours after his death).

He died in Arkansas, November 2, 1966, of acute pancreatitis. He was buried in the Bailey Cemetery, near Keswick, Iowa, his birthplace. Survivors include his wife and three adopted children: Mrs. James (Barbara) May, Norwalk, Iowa; Charles R. Jones, Orlando, Florida; Loren Jones, Pollock Pines, California; and three grandchildren. Two brothers preceded him in death.

Myrle Jones was a stimulating personality. As a friend he was warm and sincere. His thought was always for the welfare of others and he gave unselfishly of himself. His life was well rounded and immensely worth while.



## FIELD REPORTS

In much of the state dry weather set in shortly after the start of the shorebird migration and mudflats dried rapidly. As a result some localities saw few waders. Aside from the lack of moisture and the occurrence of winds of tornadic force on several days, the fall weather has favored the birdwatcher.

**Pelicans, Cormorants, Herons.** Observations of White Pelicans, all from the west, were: 25 on 18 September, (DH); 2-300 on the 19th east of Estherville, seen by Jack McLane, (PL); 150 on 2 October at Dunbar Slough, (JF); and 300 the first week in October, (EG). A Cormorant's nest containing young was found on 17 August, (FK), and the species was seen for the first time in the Rice Lake Area, (BS). On 14 August 41 Great Blue Herons were observed, (FK). Two immature Little Blue Herons first seen on 23 July at Brown's Slough stayed for a month, (HMcK).

**Geese, Ducks.** An early observation was one of 75 Canadas on 24 September by Geo. Marsh, (DH). "Geese going over in great flocks; first Canadas on 29 September, and the peak on 15 and 16 October", (JK). "Tremendous migration of both Canada and Blue and Snow, especially the first two weeks of October", (BS). In the Hamburg area the goose migration was thought neither early nor late, but had not peaked by 17 October, (EG). Most ducks seemed late, no large movements even in late October, (FK). An exception is the Black: 8 seen on 8 September north of Cambridge, (JR). Mallards and Pintails were thought to be up, (RK).

**Hawks.** A "great migration" on 15 October, (JK). Nineteen Turkey Vultures were seen on 2 October, (PL). Several reports of Goshawks: 9 September, (BS); 16 September, an immature, (HMcK); and 25 September, (RH). Sharp-shinned seemed common, (PL). Cooper's, 2 at Fayette on 7 October and 2 at Des Moines on the 8th. Red-tailed were seen every day in late October, (JK), and it was thought there was a very good migration, (BS). A Harlan's was seen at close range on 9 October, (JK). Red-shouldered was seen 14 and 25 September, (RH), and an immature was seen where adults had previously been observed, (HMcK), but numbers were thought down, (RK, JR). Migrations of Broad-winged from the 12th to 18th of September were noticed by several observers in the central and east-central sections. Both Bald Eagle observations were of immatures; 16 September, (RH), and one in October, (HMcK). Marsh Hawks were "well represented all fall", (DK), and 2-5 seen every day in late October, (JK), but only one seen, (RH). Osprey: seen on four dates, (RH), and 2 at Brown's Slough were the first in two years, (HMcK). An immature Peregrine was seen on 2 October, (BS). Pigeon Hawks were seen at Castalia on 4 September, (DK), and at Gladbrook on 15 October, (RH). Sparrow Hawks: "well represented all fall", (DK); "a fine migration", (BS); and 10-12 seen on 18 September, (DH).

**Pheasants.** Many Ring-necked young of the year indicate a good comeback, (JK). A good description of a Reeve's Pheasant seen on 18 October near Red Haw State Park, (HMcK).

**Shorebirds.** Observations of these were entirely a matter of local conditions. "Good season from late July to early October with lots of flats and ponds with less vegetation", (FK). "Large concentrations at Dunbar Slough due to low water", (JF). "Practically non-existent except for a few Killdeer and Yellow-legs", (BS). "Practically non-existent due to lack of habitat", (JK), with a similar situation around Des Moines. Golden Plovers: one at Cardinal Marsh on 3 August was early. Other observations were at Coralville and Dunbar Slough. The largest flocks of Black-bellied Plovers were 40-50 seen near Hudson by several observers, (RH), and 25 at Brown's Slough on the early date 10 August, (HMcK). A few were seen at Coralville and

Dunbar. The only Ruddy Turnstone reported was seen on 14 September, (PK). Woodcock: seen on 10 September in Boone Co., (RK); on the 15th in Franklin Co., (JR), and three times in the same month, (JF). Fred Pierce writes that on about 10 May Conservation Officer James A. Becker found a Woodcock on the nest with one egg and one just-hatched young. This was southeast of Independence. On 7 October Mrs. Velie saw 70-100 Snipe near Hudson, (RH). Longbilled Dowitchers were seen often, with 30 on 16 October, (JF). As many as 12 Stilt Sandpipers were seen through August and early September at Cardinal Marsh, (DK). A flock of 20 Hudsonian Godwits was seen on 23 October, (HMcK), and "a few" Marbled Godwits on 27 and 28 August, (DH). Avocets: 4 on the Reservoir 22 September, (FK), and 35 near Chariton on 23 October, (HMcK). Three reports of the rare Northern Phalarope: 28 August at Cardinal Marsh, (DK); Dunbar Slough 4 September, (JF); and 7 on 7 September at Coralville, (FK).

**Gulls, Terns, Doves, Cuckoos.** Franklin's Gulls were seen in October: several good sized flocks early in the month, (BS); 25 on the 15th, (JK); numerous flocks on the 15th and 16th near Ruthven, (RK); and several hundred at Fisher's Lake on the 9th, (HP). Caspian Terns were reported from only two places; Coralville on 15 and 17 September, (FK), and Dunbar Slough, on the 18th, (JF). Between 90 and 100 Mourning Doves were seen in one day, (RH). A Yellow-billed Cuckoo on 16 October was rather late, (PL), and an even later one, minus tail feathers, was at Marble Rock on the 22nd, (PK).

**Owls, Whip-poor-wills, Nighthawks, Hummingbirds.** Saw-whet Owls were banded on 12 and 23 October, the former a rather early date, (PP). Whip-poor-will was seen as late as 5 October, (PP). Considerable movement of Nighthawks was noticed; a small flock on 2 September and 75 the next day, (DH); at least a thousand on the 4th, (HP); 7-800 in four evenings, (RH); and many moving on 10 September with 25 on 2 October, (PP). There was a noticeable migration of Hummingbirds from the last week of August through September, (BS); 4-5 were seen by Bob Nickolson on 23 September, (DH); and 6 banded from 28 to 31 August, with the last on 15 September, (PP).

**Flycatchers, Swallows.** Some Empidonax species noted 22 September, (KH), and also found with the earlier warbler waves in Des Moines. E. Kingbird: "Dozens in a short drive on 28 August—greatest concentration ever", (JK); 80 seen on 3 September, (FK). E. Phoebes were seen on the late date 16 October by Mrs. Fuller and (PL). Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were in good numbers with 34 banded from 16 August to 17 September, (PP). On 27 August a "tremendous" flock of Barn, Cliff, and Rough-winged; on the 29th, hundreds of Cliff and Bank Swallows were seen. A flock of 60 Cliff was seen feeding on 9 September, (GB). A flock of 3000, probably all Tree was seen on 9 October, (PL), and on 8 October, several flocks, one of 400 were seen, (PP). About 100 Bank were seen on 20 September, (RH).

**Nuthatches, Wrens, Mimics, Thrushes.** The only Red-breasted Nuthatch report is of one on 23 October, (JF). A Winter Wren was found in the Fayette area on 7 October, (RH); 2 were seen on the 14th near New Hampton by Nick Osness, (RH); and 16 banded from 20 September to 16 October, (PP). Fred Kent's first Bewick's Wren in years was at Coralville on 9 September. A Mockingbird was at Goose Lake 23 August, (JF). Thrushes were scarce but lots of Robins, (PK). Quite a few Robins — 75 — 100 in one flock on 18 September, and a few sharing a large Grackle roost, (DH). Robins scarce all fall but many seen on 23 October, (GB), and in almost unprecedented numbers in Des Moines. A wave of Swainson's was noticed on 2 October, (JK). A late Veery was found on 23 September, (PP), and what may be only the second Polk Co. fall record was one on 16 October, (HP). All of the Hyl-



cichla genus were very scarce in Des Moines, due, perhaps, to the dry conditions. Bluebirds appeared to have had a good migration, (RH, GB, JR, HMcK).

**Kinglets, Waxwings, Vireos.** Golden-crowned Kinglets seemed numerous: 20 on 8 October, (RH); 12 on the 17th, (FK); and 33 on the 16th, (PP). Ruby-crowned were plentiful, (GB, JK), and 273 were banded by Petersen on 12 October. Cedar Waxwings: many juveniles noted in mid-September, (KH); present throughout summer with tremendous influx in mid-August, (BS). A wave of Yellow-throated Vireos on 19 October, (JK). A number of Red-eyed appeared with the early warbler migrants in Des Moines. Philadelphia's banded as late as 27 September, (PP). Warbling, a wave on 19 October, (JK).

**Warblers.** Varying reports on the warbler migration were received. A very great wave was seen at Big Wall Lake on 15 September, (HP); 13 September, good wave, many species, (RH); 15 and 16 September, good wave of warblers and vireos, (JK). Few waves apparent, but a good warbler year; primary wave, 16-18 September, (PP). Most of the warblers seemed to hit Des Moines on 4 and 17 September and 1 October, the first, in contrast to last year, included many Red-eyed Vireos. No good wave except for Myrtles on 16 October; few numbers but good variety on 18 September, (PL). Disappointing migration, (EG); not quite up to normal, (PK); poor, (JF). The first Golden-winged was banded on 20 August, an early date, (PP). A Tennessee on 4 September was also early. Cape Mays were banded this fall for the first time, and Black-throated Blue for the second time. Blackburnian on 25 August, and Chestnut-sided on 19 August were early, (PP). "Trees were full of Myrtles on 11 October", (EG), and, plentiful, (GB). A wave of Palm on 25 August, (JK). A Wilson's on 18 October was late while a Canada on 19 August was early. Mrs. DeLong was banding Orange-crowned, Myrtles, and vireos in mid-October, (EG). A Brewster's was identified on 30 August, (HMcK).

**Icterids, Tanagers, Finches.** About 50 Yellow-headed Blackbirds were near Whiting 28 August, (DH). An estimated 5000 Grackles were seen 2 October, (PL). A flock of 5-600 Cowbirds on 16 October was unusual, (HP). A Summer Tanager was seen by Albert Berkowitz on 8 October, a late date. The sparrow migration was thought good, (JK), very unsatisfactory, (PK), and, poorest in years and two weeks late, (FK). Early Purple Finches were 6 on 9 September, (RH). Red Crossbills: 1 on 10 August, (PK); 15 on the Iowa State campus since mid-September, (DP); 4 in Jefferson Cemetery on 16, and 18 on 23 October, (JF). LeConte's: 3 on 10 August, (HMcK), and three October sightings in Des Moines. Henslow's was seen 23 July, (FK), and one banded 29 October, (PP). Harris', a good year; (PP), and more than usual at Des Moines. White-throated, 125 or more seen on 2 October, (RH). Lincoln's, abundant this fall with 35 seen on 8 October, (HP).

Darwin Koenig, who has been a regular contributor has submitted his last report as he is now attending Utah State Univ. Notes on the winter season should be sent in not later than 1 February.

Contributors: Mrs. Gladys Black, Pleasantville; John Faaborg, Jefferson; Mrs. Edw. Getscher, Hamburg; Mrs. Darrell Hanna, Sioux City; Russell Hays, Waterloo; K. Huehn, Ames; Jim Keenan, Ogden; Fred Kent, Iowa City; Richard Knight, Ames; Pearl Knoop, Marble Rock; Darwin Koenig, Castalia; Peter Lowther, Burlington; Howard McKinley, Russell; Mrs. Harold Peasley, Des Moines; Peter C. Petersen, Jr., Davenport; Don Peterson, Ames; Jim Rod, Cambridge; Barton Sutter, Hanlontown. WOODWARD H. BROWN, 4815 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, Iowa, 50312.

## GENERAL NOTES

(Editor's Note:—Death claimed William G. Youngworth on November 1, 1966, at age 60. Shortly before his passing he requested the substitution of the following notes for a formal obituary).

**Fort Benton, Montana, of Old.**—Deep throated whistles were heard and the townspeople hurried down to the landing. There they saw the Pioneer and the General Grant pulling up to their moorings. Here were new settlers, news from the outside world, and letters from loved ones back east. These two river steamers were the first to come in that year, and they were early for the ice was not yet gone from the river. The two boats would soon be loaded, to the gunwales, with bales of furs, wool, and many other products and then began the long trip down the Missouri River to Sioux City, Omaha, and Saint Louis.

Soon scores of other steamers of similar construction and many flat boats and barges would take on cargoes at these same wharfs and go down the river that flowed swiftly to the south and to the sea.

The government had enormous ware-houses, in which they stored goods for the numerous Indian Reservations and the army posts and forts. These ware-houses were kept full by incoming steamers. Connections with the settled states could be kept up for only a short time each year. This was from June until August. Before the first of June the river was a seething mass of treacherous ice, and after August the water was so low, that even the smallest steamer had great difficulty in moving on the river.

But these days of risk and adventure were doomed and soon the stately, two funnelled, stern and side paddle vessels would cease to ply their way along the muddy Missouri, from Saint Louis to Fort Benton, Montana.

The old steamers gradually gave way to the iron monsters that thundered and roared across the vast prairies. And as if to aid in their destruction, the old Muddy began a series of changes along it's course. The water became shallow and sand bars became numerous and very dangerous to navigation. The final destructive measure, by the river, a great ice-flow came that same spring, much later than usual. It caught many of the heavily laden boats, that were making what would be their last trip, and the Missouri made sure it would be their last, by wrecking a great many of the old steamers and leaving their remains strewn along it's whole changing course.

At Fort Benton the ware-houses were torn down and carried away to be made into houses for the endless tide of homeseekers. But the old wharfs, the wharfs that could tell many a tale, were left; and as time passed, and each spring the mighty flows of ice surged down the river, they took their toll of the old docks and landings. Finally all that was left was a few old piling, that thrust their moss-covered heads from the swift current.

To the passing stranger these stubs appeared to be out of place standing near a huge high bridge of six spans, that crossed the river and over which rumbled the great locomotives of the present day. However to the old-timers, who still sit around the stove in the general store, these same objects bring back memories of the golden days, that dim the eye and hush the voice when spoken of.—WILLIAM YOUNGWORTH, 3119 2nd St., Sioux City.

**The Song Periods of the Song Sparrow.**—During the winter of 1927-28, the writer had the opportunity to observe several Song Sparrows, *M.m.cooperi*, while in the city of Los Angeles, California. In February the Song Sparrows were heard quite frequently and the writer decided to time the birds and see if there was any uniformity, from day to day, in the number of times the birds sang in the course of the morning.

Two Song Sparrows were watched in particular, although the second one was observed more for comparison. Song Sparrow number one spent his

feeding hours in the vicinity of a large pansy bed and a low hedge, which surrounds this plot. His song perch was the top of a tall spruce tree nearby. The second bird had his private feeding ground in a rose garden and his perch was a small pine tree, just across the street from the perch of the first bird.

The birds usually sang during the morning hours and again in the afternoon, however occasionally the song would be given at any time of the day. Bird number one was first timed on February 17, 1928, then on the 19, and again on the 24.

February 17, 1928.

First period of song,

Time 9:00 - 9:07 A.M. Number of times song given per minute.

1st minute .....	8 times	4th minute .....	3 times
2nd " .....	7 "	5th " .....	7 "
3rd " .....	6 "	6th " .....	5 "

February 19, 1928.

First period of song

Time 9:02 - 9:08 A.M.

1st minute .....	8 times	4th minute .....	7 times
2nd " .....	7 "	5th " .....	8 "
3rd " .....	7 "	6th " .....	6 "

Second period of song

Time 9:18 - 9:22

1st minute .....	6 times	3rd minute .....	7 times
2nd " .....	7 "	4th " .....	7 "

Third period of song

Time 9:37 - 9:46

1st minute .....	6 times	5th minute .....	6 times
2nd " .....	6 "	6th " .....	6 "
3rd " .....	5 "	7th " .....	7 "
4th " .....	7 "	8th " .....	7 "
		9th " .....	4 "

Fourth period of song

Time 9:49 - 9:57

1st minute .....	4 times	5th minute .....	6 times
2nd " .....	2 "	6th " .....	7 "
3rd " .....	5 "	7th " .....	6 "
4th " .....	6 "	8th " .....	6 "

February 24, 1928.

First period of song

Time 10:11 - 10:12

1st minute .....	5 times
------------------	---------

Second period of song

Time 10:14 - 10:26

1st minute .....	5 times	7th minute .....	6 times
2nd " .....	6 "	8th " .....	4 "
3rd " .....	7 "	9th " .....	5 "
4th " .....	7 "	10th " .....	7 "
5th " .....	5 "	11th " .....	7 "
6th " .....	7 "	12th " .....	7 "

There seems to be no definite regularity in the time elapsing between the actual song periods, as it runs from two minutes to as long as fifteen minutes. Also the length of time, which the bird actually sang was not very certain as it varied from a period of a minute or two, to the longest period



of twelve minutes on February 24. However, by averaging up the number of songs given per minute, we find that this bird sang on the average of a little more than six times per minute. Only full songs were recorded as at times the bird would only give a note or two and then stop.

The second Song Sparrow seemed to be more erratic in its singing and considerably slower, for it gave its song about five times a minute. A curious thing observed was the habit of the second bird beginning to sing as soon as the first bird had started to sing. Bird number two would also stop singing when the first bird had ceased singing. There also seemed to be a bit of jealousy between the birds and on several occasions bird number one would fly across the drive and launch a mild attack at his fellow songster, usually driving him from his perch and down into the dense shrubbery below.—WILLIAM YOUNGWORTH, 3119 2nd St., Sioux City.

**Two Early Fall Arrivals at Sioux City.**—When Woodward H. Brown kindly sent me a copy of the **Polk County Check-list**, little did he know what a challenge he was tossing out to a serious student of Iowa bird life. One of my main interests in ornithology has been a very intensive study of the arrival and departure of the various species of birds both spring and fall. Records kept for forty years from a given area eventually catch up with themselves and it becomes harder each succeeding year to break a previous arrival or departure date. However, the Polk County Check-list gave me not only an opportunity to try to break some of the records listed in that publication, but also to compete as one individual against a large field of bird-watchers in Des Moines.

To break many of those Des Moines records is almost impossible, but to occasionally tie them is most gratifying indeed. So, when on September 28, 1966, when I watched a Red-breasted Nuthatch at a distance of five or six feet as it fed unafraid in one of our arbor vitae trees, I immediately rushed into the study to check the Des Moines record. I found that their first arrival was in the week of September 30th and I was happy to tie it.

One tie record would be good field work, but to have two ties was almost noteworthy. Earlier in the day I had spotted a lone Purple Finch enjoying the fresh water in the bird bath and had broken my own fall arrival date for this bird by ten days, besides tying the Des Moines record for the week of September 30th.—WILLIAM YOUNGWORTH, 3119 2nd St., Sioux City.

**Fly-Catching Common Grackles.**—The pens and alleys of the Sioux City Stockyards Company are a good source of food for large flocks of House Sparrows, Starlings and Rock Doves and for a few other species as well. In mid and late September the last place in the city that I will see Purple Martins or Barn Swallows is over and about the stockyards area. On warm days late fly hatches are common in those pens and the birds are of course the first to know that.

Over the years I have watched grackles and Starlings spend long periods of time catching flying ants on the wing and at times I am almost convinced that the Starlings catch more flying insects than our meagre population of Purple Martins. October 12, 1966, turned into a balmy day with temperatures in the low eighty degrees and the fly hatch at the stockyards must have been tremendous, for over many of pens long lines of Common Grackles and Starlings sat on the electric and telephone wires and waited until a fly would come up near them and then they would fly out and catch it and return to their perch. I suppose this activity went on as long as the flies were emerging and as long as the birds were not disturbed too much. Oh yes, the versatile House Sparrow is not to be out done in such an situation, where food is present, and dozens of them were also seen hawking for these insects.—WILLIAM YOUNGWORTH, 3119 2nd St., Sioux City.

**A Curious Bird.**—The bird stares at me in its predicament unblinking, curious, distrustful but not fearful. The predicament is that its legs above the feet are held in the firm grasp of human fingers as it rests not uncomfortably in the hand of my husband. The large golden-yellow eyes rimmed with narrow bands of dark brown feathers, something like an actress' heavy mascara, are momentarily dimmed as the transparent nictitating membranes move quickly across the eyes to cleanse them. With the patience and calm of an avian Job, it surveys me as it sits contemplating the situation. For the bird this may be its first contact with the human animal and possibly this explains why it remains so still and appears so intensely interested in its new experience.

The thing you notice about it immediately are the yellow eyes, those accented eyes surrounded by a white area like a mask on a chocolate brown head flecked with white. The tiny black and sharply hooked bill clicks as my hand is raised over its head with a finger about to touch the softness of its feathers. The chest and belly of the bird are predominantly white streaked with rich chocolate brown. The back, wings and tail are predominantly brown flecked with white. Its white feathered feet are clenched, but if I move my finger toward them they open and display black needle sharp talons which kill with speed the White-footed Mice on which it preys.

If a person is hardy and enjoys winter bird hiking, he might find a bird of this species staring back at him with its characteristic calm from between the branches of some thick evergreen. But, unless you do winter hike or perhaps, as we do, have this petite bird venture into a mist net on its early morning hunt; it will remain known to you only in pictures. Its nesting grounds are primarily to the north of Iowa and it does not have any habits which make it conspicuous while it winters here.

We place the bird among the branches of a big Blue Spruce. It doesn't fly or in any way act as though it ever feared that it might never see another sunrise. It perches there and continues to watch us curiously as we move away from it. Its only reminder of the morning's misadventures is a small aluminum bracelet on its right leg. As we move away from the big spruce, my husband notes that this Saw-whet Owl is the tenth one he has banded and released this fall netting season here in Davenport.—MARY LOU PETERSEN, 2736 E. High St., Davenport.

**Parasitic Jaeger in Winnebago County.**—On Sunday, September 4, 1966, about 6:00 p.m. (DST), my brother Mark and I were sitting on the shore of Rice Lake finishing off the plums we had picked while hiking through the refuge. Mark had just mentioned something about the graceful flight of a bird, and I looked up expecting to see one of the many Ring-billed or Herring Gulls that had been in evidence all afternoon. As the bird flew closer, however, I was struck by a general impression—Parasitic Jaeger. Closer and closer it came as I eagerly noted the details—hooked jaeger bill, black cap blending into gray back, central tail feathers extending two to three inches. These details were easily viewed through binoculars as the bird flew past. However, even before I had been able to see the bird well with binoculars, one characteristic had been very noticeable—the great amount of white color that flashed as the bird flew, both on the upper- and undersides of the wings. At the time I did not realize the importance of this detail, but I recorded it along with my other field notes as I knew from past reading that distinguishing between Long-tailed and Parasitic Jaegers could be tricky.

The bird flew on down the lake until nearby vegetation blocked it from view. Boiling with excitement we ran down the trail in an attempt to get

another view, but though we searched for 30 to 45 minutes, we were unable to find the jaeger again.

Realizing the importance of our observation, I questioned Mark closely about what he had noticed when the bird had flown by. He had not been using binoculars, but his description included "black cap, long tail, and lots of white in the wings."

Looking into the literature on jaegers, I found a most excellent article by Robert Dickerman of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History in the June, 1959, issue of *The Flicker*. He reviewed the early records of jaegers in Minnesota and stated that most of the sight records must be regarded as "jaeger species" only, because the observers had relied too heavily on the length of the central tail feathers as the distinguishing characteristic. As the length of the central retrices in the two species often overlap, this character alone is not infallible. He says of the Long-tailed Jaeger, "... it has little or no white on the underside of the wing." Since the individual that Mark and I had seen had exhibited so much white on both sides of the wings, I concluded that the bird we had seen had been an adult Parasitic Jaeger in light phase. There are three published previous records of the Parasitic Jaeger in Iowa.—BARTON E. SUTTER, Hanlontown.

**An Unusual Flight of Red headed Woodpeckers.**—The afternoon of Sunday, September 4, I was sitting on the front porch. I noticed 5 or 6 Red-headed Woodpeckers flying by, but thought nothing of it as we had a couple of pair nesting near by in the woods. As soon as they had passed another group of 6 or 7 came in to sight and as they were moving by, several more appeared and soon I saw more approaching. All were moving in a direct line from south to north, just above the tree-tops, so they were plainly visible. I started to count the birds as they continued to appear and in an hour from 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM counted 130. At no time were there less than 4 or 5 birds in sight. They flew steadily from South to North and, with the exception of 4 or 5 which stopped in a dead tree for a few moments, none of them hesitated or deviated from their course. Most of the birds were adults but a few were young.

I had to leave at 2:30 and was gone for two hours and when I returned the flight was still going on. I counted 50 upon my return and if the flight had continued during my absence, as seems probable, 500 or more Red-headed Woodpeckers had passed over. This is more Red Heads than I have ever seen at one time. We have one or two pair which nest around our property and I still see them and their young, so not all the woodpeckers were on the move, or else ours have returned.—ALOIS J. WEBER, R.R. 2, Keokuk.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Birds in Our Lives**—U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Alfred Stefferud, Editor—576p., 1 color plate, 80 drawings, 372 photographs—Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Washington, D. C.—1966—\$9.00.

A large volume filled with a great variety of interesting facts concerning birds. Each chapter is written by a different author, with sixty-one contributing. Among those perhaps most familiar to Iowans are Shirley Briggs, Carl



Buchheister, Allan Cruickshank, Phillip Du Mont, Ira Gabrielson, Joseph Hickey, Roger Peterson, Olin Pettingill, Jr. and Chandler Robbins. In most cases the authors deal with their area of specialization.

The first of nine sections gives a general picture of the uses and values of birds. The section on "literature and arts" covers the ways birds have influenced literature, commercial and fine art, music, folklore, language, geographic names, stamps, coins and their use as state and national symbols. "Sports and recreation" deals with hunting, bird watching and photography, bird attraction, aviculture, falconry, ornamental and game fowl breeding and an excellent discussion of the Christmas bird censuses. "In nature scheme" shows the importance of interrelationships especially concerning raptors, fishing birds, scavengers and insectivores. The science and husbandry section covers aviation, banding, health relationships to human populations, poultry, pigeons and doves and the influence of birds on primitive cultures. "The hand of man" discusses pesticide effects, hunting as a conservation factor, introduction of foreign species, water pollution, T.V. tower mortalities, and man's use of resources. "For better or worse" continues with consideration of airport collision problems, power line and pole damage, farming and forestry effects, and problems and pleasures in cities. "Answers to conflicts" goes into detail on economic problems caused by overabundant birds. The final section called "for their survival" tells about laws and organizations for bird protection, endangered species, refuges and sanctuaries, predictions on changes in populations and what we have done to make the future better for birds.

In many cases aspects of birds such as hunting are viewed from more than one angle. As one would expect the style of writing varies between chapters and authors, but not to the point of becoming bothersome to the reader. Most readers will probably read one chapter or section at a time anyway, so this may not be noticed. The main plan of the book is to show how all levels of government (and therefore people), must consider them in land-use planning. Any bird watcher would find much of interest in this volume. While not like the typical reference work it contains much to refer to in a general manner. School libraries should consider it a must and the serious, conservation minded birder will find it invaluable. ed.

**Vertebrate Biology.**—Robert T. Orr—483 p., many drawings and photographs—W. B. Saunders Co., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—1966—\$8.00.

Primarily written as a college text, this would provide a fine reference for anyone more than five years past college course work. Many articles in the major ornithological journals use terms and concepts of very recent origin. The section on birds is 54 pages long and includes general characters (all systems) and special characters restricted to birds, along with a classification to family and good list of references. Birds are also discussed as examples in other chapters such as systematics, distribution, territory and home range, population movements, dormancy, reproduction, growth and development, and population dynamics. The author's style is quite readable, much more so than the average textbook. ed.

## CONTINENTAL BREEDING BIRD SURVEY

During the summer of 1966 the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife conducted a Breeding Bird Survey throughout the states east of the Mississippi. Over 600 routes were run by cooperators during this season. The data from the survey will form a basis for determining changes in songbird popu-

lations during future years. The 1967 Survey will be expanded to cover 11 additional states west of the Mississippi; including Iowa.

Each survey route is selected at random and follows a 25-mile course, to be driven by automobile. **One** trip is made during the month of June. Birders throughout the State who can identify the breeding birds of Iowa by song and sight, and are interested in assisting with this survey, are invited to contact the State Coordinator, Mr. Peter C. Petersen, Jr.

2736 E. High Street  
Davenport, Iowa, 52803

or Mr. Chandler S. Robbins, Migratory Bird Populations Station, Laurel, Maryland 20810, for additional information.

## NORTH AMERICAN NEST - RECORD CARD PROGRAM

Now that the breeding season is over we are anxious to get contributors to complete and return their nest record cards to the Laboratory of Ornithology. Last year over 25,000 completed cards were returned and from the response so far it seems that the 1966 total will better that figure. Papers using data from the nest record card program were presented at the Wilson Society Meeting at Pennsylvania State University. We hope that the use of this program by research workers will increase.—CORNELL LABORATORY OF ORNITHOLOGY, 33 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, New York, 14850.

## HERONRY LOCATIONS WANTED

Anyone knowing the location of a breeding colony of any species or group of species of heron or egret, please notify:

John Faaborg  
705 W. Madison  
Jefferson, Iowa

## SNOWY OWL SURVEY

A survey of the southward movement of Snowy Owls is being made this winter and the following information is requested:

Name and address of observer.

Date, time, and location of observation, (state, nearest town, county, and if possible: township, range, and section), habitat, activity, and weather. If perching, how high, and on what?

Anyone sending information will receive a report of results, if they so request. Observations are to be sent to the address below:

Thomas H. Nicholls  
University of Minnesota  
Museum of Natural History  
Minneapolis, Minn. 55455